



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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13 May 1986

Mr. Strobe Talbott
TIME Magazine
1050 Connecticut Avenue
Suite 850
Washington, D.C. 20036-5334

Strobe,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter of 9 May. I greatly appreciate the tone in which it is written and understand the concerns expressed in it.

I want you to know that the CIA did not "float" any kind of accusation against TIME Magazine. During a confidential discussion--one of several--with Ben Bradlee on a subject of critical national security importance, the Director mentioned en passant the concerns that the intelligence community has regarding the damage done to national security by stories in certain publications. The Director's focus, however, was on THE WASHINGTON POST and the story that it was about to run which could critically damage certain vital intelligence collection capabilities. He did not intend to have his remarks become public. Bradlee, of course, published the Director's confidential talk in order to whip up support among the media for the POST when it makes public the information it holds. An old gimmick. It was Bradlee, not the Agency, who "floated" the story in Lardner's article.

I am strongly in favor of a dialogue with you and other intelligent and objective leaders in the media about our problems, and welcome the prospect that, as you suggested, the Director and I might at some point come to New York and talk to senior TIME officials about these matters. As I mentioned to you, my previous efforts to arrange such a meeting met with, shall we say, a less than enthusiastic response.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauder".
George V. Lauder